The Sunday School Service.

BY DAVID BAILEY.

Nov. 30th, 1884.

True Wisdom.—Prov. 8 : 1—17.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me.—Prov. 8 : 17.

[*Open the Bible and read the lesson.*]

INTRODUCTION.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Wisdom and knowledge are not synonymous terms; a man may have acquired much knowledge and still be very simple. Nor does knowledge necessarily precede wisdom, for "he is the wise man who makes use of what he has. He may be poor, uncultivated and humble, but such as he has is put to its highest and right use. The fool may have great wealth, great learning and great honor, but Solomon says: "The fool saith in his heart, there is no God." "Wisdom is the right use of gifts." We all have within us more or less of a reverence or fear for God and holy things, and the use or cultivation of this gift "is the beginning of wisdom." Another has said: "Gifts of soul and body, time and talent, knowledge and life,—these are the gifts of God to men. And it is the office of wisdom to catalouge and develop these faculties and opportunities according to their relative importance and value. This definition carries us to the root question, What was man created for? To be a storehouse of material information, ranging from the cabinet of shells and bugs to the laws of the planets? To be a money-getting machine, or simply to live by so much eating and drinking and sleeping, and then to die? We say no! But to develop character, to grow in the knowledge of God, and to be true to the law of his own being. The soul lasts longer than the tenement which holds it, hence the culture of spiritual life is of greater moment than the raiment of the body. The character has more value than text-books or social title or mortgage bonds, because there is a hereafter into which such things cannot go. In the comparative estimates of the material and the spiritual, men make mistakes; but wisdom clarifies the judgment and teaches us to keep the pearls and let go the cheap case that holds them. She teaches men that the knowledge of God is the root of all knowledge, because more permanent, deeper and higher, more fruitful of results in character and life and more comprehensive in scope.

Be wise, then, in the *right* use of the gifts which God has put into your heart and hand; for such *right use* is the wisdom of men. Lest we should go wrong and abuse these gifts of God, the cry of wisdom is ever sounding in the ears of men."

The wisdom spoken of in the lesson is some times thought to be used as a figure representing Christ, and it may be mentioned that there is a similarity between this Wisdom and the Word spoken of in the first chapter of John's gospel.

LESSON.

Verse 1. "Doth not wisdom cry?" Notice the negative form of the interrogative. It leaves no doubt as to the answer expected. "Put forth her voice." Men are so slow to hear the voice of wisdom that an effort must be made to induce them to hear.

Verse 2. Stands in prominent and much-frequented places so that more will have an opportunity to hear. "Places of paths." Places where paths meet.

Verse 3. "Gates * * entry * * doors." All refer to places of entrance through the city wall.

Verse 4. "Unto you, O men, I call." Unto all men.

Verse 5. "O ye simple." Those without experience in the world whether learned or unlearned. "Fools." Probably those who have already been misled. "Be of an understanding heart." Mere intellectual wisdom was not sufficient.

Verse 6. "Excellent things." Nothing can be more excellent than the words pertaining to salvation. "The opening of my lips." The words spoken. "Right things." Straight, honest and good; the opposite of tortuous or dishonest.

Verse 7. "Truth * * wickedness." These are placed in contrast, showing the extreme to which foolishness might go.

Verse 8. "Are in righteousness." Spoken in honesty and truthfulness, without any desire to mislead. "Forward." Wickedly, disobedient.

Verse 9. "To him that understandeth." He that has a desire for moral and religious instruction. "Find knowledge." Every one may find knowledge if they comply with the requisite conditions.

Verse 10. Notice the value that is placed upon instruction and knowledge.

Verse 11. "Things that may be desired." Desired by those void of wisdom.

Verse 12. "Dwell with prudence." Have prudence for my constant companion.

In the verses following we have various compliments to wisdom, and in the 17th verse, the Golden Text of the lesson, we have a declaration which should inspire confidence and provoke diligence in seeking after wisdom. The early seekers referring to those who do not loiter in their search.

From the Old Berlin Church.

ELDER E. L. YODER, Office editor,

Dear Sir and Brother; I learn by letter and otherwise that it is reported at other points that thirty or more of the Brethren at Berlin, Pa., have gone back to the German Baptists, we simply wish to say that this is but another German Baptist error; for we know whereof we speak when we say that the Brethren of the Berlin church are to-day as united in the bonds of love and peace, and are as well grounded on the Rock Christ as at any time since they have shaken off the shackles and traditions of men. On Sunday (2nd inst) we walked to the "Buechly Meeting House," and endeavored to hold forth the word there at 10 A. M. After services we were taken by brother Aaron J. Cober to the home of brother Israel Cober, father of our esteemed brother, Elder Alvin A. Cober; stopping on the way at brother Aaron's home and refreshing the natural man. Arriving at brother Israel's, we found quite a number of the brethren from Berlin and surrounding neighborhood gathered together. After a short talk on our Creed (the Bible,) we went down to and into the water and there "buried with Christ in baptism" three precious young souls. Among the brethren from Berlin who came to witness this ordinance performed was brother W. H. Menges with conveyance ready to take us "over the ridge" to the "Trent" meeting-house where we joined with the brethren in their feast of love.

Returning home where we arrived at ten P. M. rather cold on account of the cold night air. But as we came near the place we call home brother Menges said, "Brother Johnny, there is a light in the window for thee." Sure enough "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me" was waiting for us, and gave us a warm reception which made us quite comfortable again. As we sat before the warm stove we felt like thanking God for the blessed enjoyments of the day and the comforts of home and the favors of kind brethren. By invitation brother R. Z. Replogle came to Berlin on the 13th inst., and began a protracted meeting in our "Buechly meeting house" and last night when the invitation was extended to "stand up for Jesus," three stood up and we feel sure more are counting the cost and will stand up before the meeting closes, we pray God so to direct. Brother Replogle is an earnest worker in the Master's cause. Yours fraternally, J. H. KNEPPER.

Berlin, Pa.

A Surprise.

I wish to relate through the EVANGELIST, a circumstance which I call a complete surprise.

On the morning of Nov. 5th, while I was busy husking corn, I was thinking how good and how thankful we should be when we have good crops and how cheerfully we should gather them knowing that every good gift which we receive cometh from the bountiful hand of our Father. While thus musing I glanced toward the house and observed smoke issuing from our "spare room." I did not know what it meant, but worked on. Ere long I looked again and saw carriages going to the barn; this suggested to me that I was going to be taken; but not so.

Brothers Abner Brown, David Rittenhouse and others soon came into the field and demonstrated their intentions by going to work as though they were at home. This was not all; when we went to the house for refreshments we found several sisters there.

The tables were spread with nourishments which evidently did not come from our buttery. We seated ourselves and did justice to the occasion.

The sisters, being sisters Brown, Collins, Rittenhouse and others, seemed more numerous than the brothers. They were all in a good mood just as God's children always are.

The brethren I and returned to the field; but I did not know what the sisters were doing till evening, when they showed me as pretty a quilt as I ever saw. This was the "complete surprise."

We cannot sufficiently express our thanks to those brethren and sisters, but I hope they will ever remember that the kindest impulses of our hearts go out to them. We trust that they will accept our good wishes, and, while we are thankful to one another we should not be forgetful of the gratitude which we owe to God.

CYRUS KIMMEL.

Ainger, O.

Gone to Sleep.

The white-robed angel of Death left the celestial portals on Sunday morning, November 2nd, and, coming to earth, entered the dwelling of brother Welty and sister Lizzie Fahrney, and bore from their arms, their darling babe, Ora Susan. The little one had been suffering for several days with Pneumonia and the anxious parent tried in vain to restore it back to health. The death angel stooped to lift it in his arms, the dim eyes closed a last little sigh escaped the pale lips and the precious jewel was gone, the casket empty.

"Then fell upon that house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin
And softly from that hushed and darkened room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in."

Little three-year-old Freddie comforted his little sister by saying, "Don't cry, Gracie; Ora is only asleep." So we say to the parents: Don't weep; Ora has only gone to sleep to wake in that home beyond the skies. Look up, father, look up, mother, in the spirit world there dwells another white-robed form, a snowy bud immortal. The little blue eyes that shall never grow dim again, look down upon you, the little red lips that shall never grow pale and white again, are wreathed in heavenly smiles. One of the little hands that shall never again grow stiff and cold is held in the hand of Christ; the other it holds out to you to draw you nearer to Christ, who is keeping your treasure for you.

The empty cradle, the little folded dresses, the baby toys, will often cause you tears and heartaches, but they will also gladden your hearts by reminding you that your precious little one is with the angels and waits to bid you a welcome at the pearly gates. Heaven and Jesus will henceforth always be nearer and dearer to you because you have added one to the heavenly host, and you have given a jewel to be placed in the diadem that crowns the Savior's brow. Look up then, and be comforted, for all is well with the child.

LAURA E. GROSNICKLE.

Boonsboro, Md., Nov. 4.

From Stirrup Grove, Ill.

DEAR EVANGELIST: August 16th was held one of those "quarterly councils," in Otter Creek church, Macoupin county, Illinois, and upon that day Elder Javan Gibson determined to make a record for himself and church. Consequently a member was expelled, one who believed that the Savior perfected his plan of salvation during his sojourn upon earth, and did not intend that the councils and caucuses of men should add anything thereto, making such additions a test of church membership, thereby making them essential to salvation. Said member was expelled for not conforming to the "order of the church" in dress and wearing of the hair; also, for quoting against the order above mentioned, this scripture: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book."—Rev. 22 : 18.

On the evening of Oct. 1st, brother J. H. Swihart came over and began meetings at a school house, one mile from the church. He preached the Word, the Word only, and did it effectually. As a result of all, four from the German Baptists united with the Brethren, one baptized and one more applicant.

On the evening of the eighth, brother Swihart called a meeting at Girard and organized a church of sixteen members.

On the evening of the 7th, the greater number of the members of the Auburn church, called upon brother Swihart at his residence, as he and his family move to Indiana in a few days to live among the Brethren there.

Brother Swihart has exchanged work for the coming winter with brother Bashor, and consequently will be in Virginia for about three months. May his usual success and the blessings of God attend him on his mission of love, is our prayer.

I. M. GIBSON.

Why Pray for College Men?

I. All allowance made for exceptions, it is still the educated men who lead the thought and action of the world. Our colleges are now forming the men who will form the coming age. For this there are two reasons: First, the strongest and brightest minds are naturally impelled to seek the highest education. Leading minds naturally gravitate toward college centers. Second, minds that are not of the first rank, from years of careful training, acquire some of the qualities of leadership. This is a necessary result of the self-discipline involved in the completion of a course of study at any honest, thorough college. The broader outlook acquired fits a man to be a leader within such limits as his natural abilities mark out for him.

Whatever force affects young men in college, then, works with the advantage of an immense leverage. It is leading the future leaders. It is forming the ideals of the men who shall be, in science, in literature, in the professions, the master workmen.

I maintain, then, that no question is to-day so important for the American people as the question: What are the ideals of a desirable life which are now forming in the minds of the young men in our higher institutions of learning?

If false standards prevail at college, false lives will be the result. If the tone of a college is such that the free, reckless spending of money, unrestrained devotion to athletic sports as an end and not a means, and the social sychophancy which seeks only to make such relations of so-called friendships as shall tend to advancement in society or business in later life—if the tone of the college is such that these ideals prevail among the students, supplanting the true aims and standards of a college course—all through their future lives, the young men who are trained at that college will suffer for it, and through their influence society will suffer for it.

Without considering here the more positive vices that may prevail, if there is simply a lack of high, self-denying ideals, if college students, yeilding to the worship of material wealth that marks our time, look to the acquisition of money, to quickly won ease and hurried progress, to physical comfort as the cheif objects of their pursuit in life, all our brightest hopes for the future of our people are doomed to disappointment, so far as men can affect the future.

On social and political grounds, it is of the gravest importance to the future of our country that our young men, while at college, be under the best possible influences.

II. We who are Christians beleive that God's claims on man, man's relations with God, are by far the most important considerations in life. The supreme question for every thinking man is: "What think ye of Christ?" We believe in God. We believe in the utter helplessness of sinful men without God's mercy. All the records of our race's blood-stained history, all fallible human legislation, with its perpetual provisions for crime and punishment, all broken human hopes, all open graves, all sundered family ties, all our own despairing failures, when we have striven to rise unaided to nobler, fuller life—all this confirms the teaching of God's Word, convincing us that we are lost in sin, condemned by a moral law which we are forced to erect before ourselves as a standard, yet which we are hopelessly unable of ourselves to reach.

But God has not left us in this condition. The man Christ Jesus who is also God,

"Once man with man, now God with God above us,
Loving us now, and ever more to love us,

has spoken peace to us who were afar off. We have learned that when this Sun of Righteousness arises, there is healing in his wings. We *know* that our redeemer lives. We know the power that comes from him in answer to prayer.

III. As reasonable men, we cannot fail to see the "potential energy" for good or evil that is stored up by every young man during his college course. As Christians, we believe in the power of prayer—of prayer for the conversion and sanctification of particular men, of definite classes of men. How can the intelligent Christians of our land, then, *help* praying with special earnestness and hopefulness for the conversion to a living faith in Christ of the young men now studying in our colleges? The week from Nov. 9th to Nov. 16th has been recommended as a time of especial prayer for young men. Should not the *young men in our colleges* have the very first place in the prayers of Christians during that week?

With the keen susceptibilities that mark their time of life, far more open than they are ready to admit to all influences, good and bad, how supremely important that these young men be taught of God! Not that they be taught *about* God simply, but *of* God, taught *by* God in that intimate, sanctifying, satisfying teaching which the Holy Spirit gives to a soul, when he takes of the things of Christ and shows them to him.

If a young man passes out of college, his trained intellectual power as yet unconsecrated to God, statistics show that the probabilities are sadly against his turning to the Master later in life. What a loss! What an infinite loss! What a gain for the powers of evil when the adversary fixes such a man, by the simple law of inertia, in a state of alienation from God for all time and for eternity!—PRES. MERRILL E. GATES, LL.D., in *N. Y. Independent.*

He that is habituated to deception in trifles will try in vain to be true in matters of importance; for truth is a thing of habit, not of will.

A profound conviction raises a man above the feeling of ridicule.